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GIFT OF

Commodore Byron McCandless

To Uncle Frank

and

Aunt Gertrude

from

Stella S. Simmons.

Christmas 1908.

Mrs. Frank Tomo Simmons



NATANA

In Old Quivira

Margaret Hill McCarter

Crane & Company
Topeka, Kan.
1908

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THIS BRIEF TALE OF A HALF-FORGOTTEN YESTERDAY
IS DEDICATED TO MY SISTER,

Lizzie Hill Williams.

957414

“**I**N all this crowded universe
There is but one stupendous Word;
And huge and rough, or trimmed and terse,
Its fragments build and undergird
The songs and stories we rehearse.

.

“**T**HERE is no tree that rears its crest,
No fern or flower that cleaves the sod,
No bird that sings above its nest,
But tries to speak this Word of God,
And dies when it has done its best.

.

“**A**ND this Great Word, all words above,
Including, yet defying all —
Soft as the crooning of a dove,
And strong as the Archangel's call —
Means only this — means only Love ! ”

—*Holland.*



In the Shadows, Soft and Dreamy.

“And even now when the night comes, and the shadows gather round,
And you tell the old-time story, I can almost hear the sound
Of the horses’ hoofs in the silence, and the voices of struggling men;
For the night is the same forever, and the time comes back again.”

JAMES W. STEELE.



It may have been a dream, yet it was so real it was as the blending of light and shadow, neither the one nor the other, but both in one. And it was so natural and full of pulsing life the dreamer caught in it no hint of mystic unreality; nor then nor ever afterward did the memory of it seem other than as a living tapestry gracing the outer walls of yesterday.

It was a Kansas Christmas Eve.

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The sun of a grand December day had swung down through a sea of crystal radiance, and lay now for one brief moment on the rim of the world in a last rich chrism of beneficent glory. A moment later, and the sun was gone, but far up the sky there shot long slender shafts of pink that touched each little floating cloud with beauty. And while the twilight deepened below, the light overhead held sway for a brief time longer. Its reflection bent earthward and caught the projecting points of the landscape in its scope. Highest of all these was the dome of the Kansas Capitol, through whose broad windows the last rays of daylight fell. They illumined the great inner concave of the dome and drove back the shadows of the upper corridor that had gathered boldly even before sunset.

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Outside, the pink grew suddenly dull, the light went out, and a gray twilight passed into a darkness that the stars pointed up with their far cold fires.

In the upper corridor the light tarries longest, as if to guard what gold cannot duplicate. For here are gathered the historic emblems of a commonwealth, the treasure-trove of Time, cast up by the fleeting years. When the light has quite gone from the sky the shadows here are gray and dreamy before they deepen into darkness. On this Christmas Eve the corners of the corridor, the hangings on the walls, the busts and their pedestals, and the cases of precious historic relics did not lose outline and blend into dull featureless space. Instead, the glow of twilight lingered and a soft radiance filled all the place. This

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that follows is only a trick of the dreamer's memory, and to the dreamer it was genuine and sweet with inspiration.

Today slipped back into yesterday. As in a wide panorama down the vista of years came the pictures of the Past whose symbols are here in the gray shadows. A soft light like an aureole was about the bust of old John Brown, whose head modeled in clay is not unlike a Greek hero's. And it was in this light that there grew, from far faint outlines at first, a picture deep and intensely real. The halls of the corridor stretched away till they compassed the valleys of the Kaw, the Neosho, and the Marais des Cygnes, with their wooded ravines, their sparsely cultivated prairies, and the log cabins of the pioneers — the first home-builders of the West.

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And farther in the picture's purple distance lay the level floors of the short-grass country over which, wandering eastward, came the Smoky Hill and the Cimarron. And beyond all these, sloping away into a never-ending barrenness under a pitiless sky, stretched an untilled land cutting an unbroken horizon-line. And everywhere loneliness and poverty joined hands with monotony and isolation, in their determination to fight back the first white settler here. In the foreground the picture grew lurid, for this was the time of Border Strife. The fires of burning homes glared savagely up at a black midnight sky. The sunshine on the prairies turned sickly pale as it fell upon the sod splotched with the blood of brave heroes and innocent victims.

And then the picture faded, and

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the gray twilight in folds of shimmering softness draped all the place with its filmy hangings.

But this was not the beginning here. A Past, back of this Past, had its own story to tell. On these corridor walls hang portraits of sainted faces, the faces of the men and women who foreran the white settler and brought the story of the blessed Gospel to the savage folk whom they called their "brothers in Christ."

It was only a wilderness to which they came, these good men and women whose portraits were wreathed about by the dim curtains of the twilight. Here and there a lonely trail led across the plain toward the Grand Prairie, the common hunting-ground of the wild tribes.

To the dreamer at that moment the Kansas of this bygone time came again. In the log mission house were

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the men and women who had consecrated their lives to a cause. Bravely they had set their faces westward and without once looking back they took hold of the slow, discouraging labor in a strange and isolated land. Father and Mother Meeker, Father and Mother Simerwell, and all the little company of Christian missionaries were here, again living over their struggles for the Red Man's welfare. And with these and beyond them were the holy men in priestly garb—Father Ponziglone, Father Schoenmacher; and earlier than these were Van Quickenborne and Meigs of reverend high calling. In the tepees of the native tribes these godly men set up the altar of the sacred Church, and the worship of Gitchie Manitou, in its uncertainty and dread, gave place to faith and hope and love. And if

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the hold of these little ones on the Christian's creed was only a feeble grasp, it was a groping toward the light, not a groveling in darkness.

But the picture vanished, and only the portraits on the walls looked down in their calm serenity upon the reverent dreamer. Among them there was the young strong face of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, gracing the military dress that betokened his official rank. As if he had stepped from the frame and like Pygmalion's "Galatea" had become endued with life, there unrolled about him a scene of heroic grandeur. A hundred years have come and gone since that scene out in mid-prairie was a part of the drama of the West. The broad Republican valley winding down from the north, cuts the picture. On the heights above it are the tepees of a thousand Pawnee warriors, called

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together now in portentous council. Over the chief's tepee floats the flag of Spain, the emblem of Pawnee allegiance. Before this council of stolid, sullen savages stands young Lieutenant Pike, erect, fearless, every inch a soldier,— a superior by instinct, a commander by birthright. He demands that the Spanish flag shall be hauled down and the Stars and Stripes be placed in its stead. It is the voice of the indomitable Saxon spirit that speaks, and the Red Man must needs obey.

But the picture faded as the others had done, and a new one came in its stead. It lies beyond the day of trail and trader, of missionary and path-maker.

In the corner of the corridor where the shades are deepest hangs an old wooden oar, such as the Frenchmen long ago had used to push back the

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sluggish waters about their crude pirogues. Dust and ashes are the hands that had held it. Wrecked or lost or thrown aside, it had fallen on an island in the Kaw. Some chance flood may have covered it with sand, and year by year a deepening soil had buried it. Ten feet below the surface it lay when the busy bridge engineers digging for the foundations of their piers had found it. The picture it called up was of the land as the roving French voyageur knew it, in its primitive beauty and picturesque savage life, full two centuries ago.

The tale this old oar might have told the dreamer would seem to be of the outer bound of this story of the West. For what could lie beyond in the dim past that the white man could fathom? Behind it seemed to stretch the long unknown

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years of an unknown people, wherein tradition itself lost count.

One token there was here, however, shut away from the light as its own story is held in the grasp of the unrecorded years. In the vault where the most precious things are kept lies an old Spanish sword that somewhere on the far plains had been lost in the far-lost years. It had its story, and the dreamer with ear attuned to silent voices heard it all. It may have been because this was the blessed Christmas Eve, when Christian folk turn back the pages tenderly to the holy night of long ago in Bethlehem. It may have been that the dreamer's own heart was chastened and only the best and kindest things of life seemed at that moment worth while. Or it may have been that the spirit of the Christ, abroad in the world on this

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Christmastide as never before, led the dreamer back to the day of its first coming to these prairies of the West. Whatever the cause, the old lost sword told a sweet story of the long ago, and through it all the same spirit that made it good to hear makes good the stories of today,—for it is the spirit of an overshadowing, unselfish love, that has the universe for its own.



Sunny Memories of Old Spain.

“Together we walked in the evening-time,
Above us the sky spread golden and clear,
And he bent his head and looked in my eyes,
As if he held me of all most dear.
Oh! it was sweet in the evening-time!”



T was Christmas Eve in the province of New Spain three centuries and a half ago. The little town of Compostela was gay with tokens of the coming holy-day. Even the brown adobe houses along the narrow streets, looking so like one another, half Spanish, half Aztec, seemed to radiate through their plain mud walls a vibration of the coming of the year's best day. Compostela, like all the towns and cities of New Spain, was very young. Hardly a score of years had passed since Cortez

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had wrested the kingdom of the Montezumas from its Aztec owners and made it a province of the proud rich peninsula of Europe. Yet in these eighteen years Mexico, with its civilization centuries old, had learned to the full what the pale-faced ruler in coat of mail could do with a conquered people. In the hoary old city of Mexico Mendoza, "the good viceroy," had his seat of government. From the Gulf to the Pacific coast, towns and cities had grown, as if by magic, on sandy plain and mild verdant mountain-slope. A host of Europeans had overrun the land. Greedy gold-hunters, gay adventurers, men hungry for political power or military glory; men eager to rebuild shattered fortunes or regild tarnished reputations; men hiding in a wild new land from the strong arm of the Spanish law, or

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burying here the corpse of a dead love, or a blasted life ambition,—all went into the making of this new province whose revenue poured steadily into the coffers of church and state in Old Spain.

The sun was low in the west on this twenty-fourth day of December, in the year of our Lord 1539, when a courier riding a tired mule came down the last lap of narrow roadway and passed through the town's eastern gate. Up the main street he took his way with the leisure of one who is ending a long journey on time and may begin his vacation a little in advance. Before the wide veranda of the largest building in the public square he halted, and a crowd at once surrounded him.

"Ho! Pedro! Pedro!" they cried in Spanish. "What news? What news?"

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"I could tell you better if I had a drop of Madeira to wet my throat. The last ships from Spain bring His Majesty's full consent to the equipping and sending out of an expedition to conquer the Seven Cities of Cibola and the land of Quivira. And Viceroy Mendoza is to prepare for it directly after the Christmas-tide. I bring many messages. I am loaded with packets, as this stubborn little mule could tell you. Something for everybody. News from home for all of you, but most for Fra Padilla."

So chattered the careless Pedro to the eager company, more than one of whom carried a homesick heart under his Spanish dress.

"Holy Father," said the courier, bowing reverently as a man in the garb of a priest approached, "give me your blessing. I bring you many

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letters, and some entrusted to your care to be given to others by you alone."

The good father gave the blessing, received from the courier's hands a sealed packet, and with a wave of benediction upon the crowd and a smile no less beneficent than his words, walked toward the monastery at the end of the street.

The sun was very low now, and a crimson glory flushed all the western sky, and bathed the misty peaks of the Sierra Madre with softest pink. Deep purple shadows were gathering in the lower valleys as the day came to these last hours of rich coloring.

Just as the courier had ridden his weary beast up the principal street of the town, a young man had passed with springing step out of the western city gate. Turning from the road that led down toward the sea,

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he climbed to a small table-land overlooking the town and the plain beyond. The air was balmy and sweet here, and a scene of varied beauty lay revealed in the sunset lights.

To the young Spaniard sitting idly on a shelf of rocky outcrop the beauty of the evening was only a harmonious note in his own mood. His mind was far away, and he gazed at the valley with eyes that saw only pictures of memory. He was a strong, handsome young fellow, with the purely Spanish features and graceful motion. There was, however, in his face a certain hint of tenderness, a suggestion of nobleness of character unlike the gay, cruel-hearted young men of his class who filled New Spain with lawlessness and dissipation in these careless years of Spanish supremacy.

The shadows below grew deeper, and the light overhead was softened

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when up the path to the little shelf of table-land Fra Juan Padilla passed with strong firm step. He was a man of powerful build, who graced the priestly garb he wore. There was in his physique no suggestion of the corpulence of gross living. Erect as a military commander, his clear olive skin, his white teeth, his firm square chin and penetrating dark eyes betokened the soldier of official rank. But his churchly dress, his broad hat, and his smile of exceeding sweetness, as if a sense of power over men were swayed by a deep love for humanity, gave him the air of one whose blessing came as a gift from God.

His face in the evening light was calm and his poise was undisturbed. Only a faint line about the mouth, and a look of deeper penetration, gave any hint of a stronger feeling than daily controlled him.

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"Good-evening, Tristan Gallego. Do I intrude, my son? Where were your thoughts at this moment that you did not see me when my shadow cut off your sunset here?"

Tristan Gallego looked up quickly.

"Good-evening, Father Padilla," he said. "*You* never intrude," he added courteously; and then as a wave of love-hunger swept over his face he continued: "My thoughts are all memories of Old Spain. Father, I am homesick tonight."

Father Padilla had that rare presence that speaks more sympathy than words express. He sat down and laid one hand gently on young Tristan's shoulder. A sense of comfort came in the very touch. "When you are homesick," he said gently, "you should come to the altar in your heavenly Father's house."

"It is His house wherever you are,

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Fra Padilla," replied Tristan, reverently. "Were you seeking me, or did you come here to be alone?"

"I have a message for you, my son," replied the Fra, "but you have something to tell me first."

The young man turned his face away and his hands gripped each other. The face of the priest at that moment lost all its reserve. A look of loving pity swept over it. A gesture which Gallego did not note, a quick movement as if he would take this strong man like a child into his own stronger arms to protect him. But when Tristan turned to him again the look had vanished and only the calm self-controlled priest sat there.

"You know why I came to New Spain, Father?"

"Tell me," replied the priest.

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"You know the Morellos of Madrid?"

Fra Padilla's face was like gray stone at that moment, and his eyes looked only at the valley before him.

"You know my father, Juan Gallego, was a spendthrift," Tristan went on.

"He was a good commander of men," the Fra responded quietly.

"But not a commander of money. I should be rich: I am very poor. I came to America to make a fortune."

"You never seemed avaricious to me, my son," the priest spoke gently.

"No; heaven knows I want money not as all those gay young men of Madrid want it, to squander on wine and women and dice. When we were rich, and my father was in his prime, I first learned to love Teresita Morello. Oh, Father, you are a priest

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and do not know what love means to a fiery young Spanish heart."

Again the priest's face blanched from the clear olive to a chalky gray, but no hint of what lay behind that face revealed itself.

"Teresita is not like the Morello blood. She is beautiful as a Madonna, and gentle and loving. And if she is my sun and moon and stars, I also am the light of her life. She did not care for my wealth when I had it, nor love me less without it, when my father became bankrupt.

"The Morello family are proud and fond of display. They would have separated us forever if they could have done so. But they could not do it."

Gallego's voice was deep with suppressed force.

"They have done such things," said Father Padilla in a low voice.

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The young Spaniard looked up quickly, and his face grew stern. "I tell you, Father, they could not. Teresita and I love each other. Oh, Father, it is so wonderful to have a love like hers. It outlives poverty and separation. Her father refused me her hand, even admission to her house, and sent her to Seville to the keeping of old Count Da Garda, his friend and cousin twice or thrice removed. I followed. So would you, Father, if you were in love. Da Garda was indulgent to us at first, and then, old and broken as he was by years of reckless living, he fell in love with Teresita himself, offering her all his fortune with its proud old name. And the Morellos, caring only for gold, mind you, gave ready consent."

The young man sat silent for some time, watching the full moon that

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was rising like a red flame over the eastern horizon-line. The night was cool, and a life-giving breath was in the air that swept over the table-land.

“Father Padilla” — young Tristan’s voice was full of the music of the Mediterranean lands — “Father, I can see the moonlight over Seville tonight as it was that night when Teresita and I sat under the vines in the palace garden and plighted our troth forever. Teresita’s eyes were like the stars and her red lips were sweet to my lips as I kissed her. There was a nightingale somewhere up the shadowed way, and the air from the Atlantic was like wine. We made our life-plans together — for ourselves, not for her proud, selfish father, nor old Da Garda, but for her and me. She would have shared my poverty, but I would not permit.

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I left her to find a fortune here where so many Spanish gentlemen have come for gold. And when I have found it I shall go back to Seville. She waits for me tonight in Old Spain. Tonight at the vesper hour—”

The bells of the monastery at that moment chimed sweetly on the evening air. The priest and Tristan bowed in reverent prayer for many minutes. Then the young man spoke again :

“When I sailed out of the harbor of San Lucar her hand was the last one I held ; her kiss I carry here in my heart. Tonight at the vesper hour we were to renew our vows though all the broad Atlantic lies between us. And I am here, Father, with a heart full of pictures of Spain, a mind full of happy memories, and a soul full of high resolve. You know

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that fortunes do not grow on trees here, to be had for the shaking, if men keep honest. I cannot take back to my loved one ill-gotten gains, for it was not for my wealth she loved me. But I have a plan."

"What is it?" queried Juan Padilla. There was a tone of pain in his voice, but Tristan did not note it. The spell of Spain was over the young lover, and his mind was far away in old Seville.

"You know, Father, that the good Mendoza is preparing even now to send out an expedition to the northward, to the rich cities of Cibola and the kingdom of Quivira. And the noted Adelantado, Francesco Vasquez de Coronado of New Galicia, is to command it. I am not of those that expect vastly more than Pizarro found in Peru among the Incas. But there is almost uncounted wealth

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for every one who goes with Coronado. And for the holy Cæsarian empire there are wide new lands, and for the blessed Mother Church vast riches. It is the opportunity of a lifetime, and I shall join the Governor of New Galicia when he comes hither in a few weeks."

Another pause, broken only by the sounds of evening. Then Gallego spoke:

"This conquest of the north will soon be accomplished, and then — home to beautiful Spain and Teresita and love. Oh, Fra Padilla, give me your blessing. I am sad and happy, both in one, tonight, for memory and hope play about the edge of a loneliness that absence will bring. But bless me, Father."

"Peace be with thee, my son," said the holy Father as he laid his hands gently on the young man's

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bowed head ; and in the silence that followed, only the rippling evening breeze and the subdued sounds from the valley broke the stillness. And then the good man spoke. It was said of him that no other man in North America had a voice at once so sweet and deep and full of power as Fra Juan Padilla's voice.

"My son, I bring you a message tonight. It is not for your hope and love and ambition, but for your endurance. Before I give it all to you I must tell you a story. It is short and not uncommon, and you will understand it. Pedro the courier brought letters from the East an hour and a half ago. You must have been on your way up here then or you would have heard the shouting in the plaza."

"Yes, Father, I had a tryst to keep, although it was only a tryst of

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time, for, as I told you, the one I keep it with is far over the sea."

"Pedro brought me many messages," the Fra continued. "Some were for me alone, and some were for me to deliver to others. One was for you."

A sudden fear seized Tristan. An involuntary quiver passed through his every fibre. But the Fra's gentle voice continued: "It is more than fifteen hundred years ago tonight that the Son of the Blessed Virgin was born. In all these fifteen hundred years men have but slowly learned His message — the message of self-sacrifice. The younger we are the harder it is to understand."

"Oh, Father!" Tristan's voice was sharp with dread.

"My boy" — there was a strength in the very sound of the good priest's tone — "let me tell you a story,—

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the story a man does not tell except in the sacredest hours of his life. Such an hour is here. You are not the only lover who ever held memories of Old Spain. Your own story was acted out before you were born. There was a young commander in the Spanish army, rich, happy, and prosperous. Too rich, too happy, and too prosperous, for the courtiers envied his success, and the king would have had his wealth. He loved a beautiful girl whose name was Nina. I do not believe your Teresita is more lovely than her — than this Nina, who is old enough now to be her mother.”

“Teresita’s mother is dead,” said Tristan.

“I know — is she? Well. This Nina loved the young officer as — your señorita loved you. I’ll make this story brief. The jealous cour-

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tiers, one of whom was madly in love with Señorita Nina, by such tricks as a king's courtiers can play deceived the beautiful girl with lies only Satan could invent for man. They could not deceive the general of the army, for he knew his young officer too well. But the beloved of this young man's soul they persuaded to the belief that her lover was false, that he had lost his fortune at cards, and that he had already cast her off. Señorita Nina was too proud to die of a broken heart. When the army came home from a long campaign she was the wife of the man who had lied to her against her lover. Exulting in his success, he had boldly declared to her his scheme for winning her. Señora Nina came alone one sad night to the home of her lover, and in an agony of soul she told him all the story, of which

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he until that moment knew nothing.

"In one brief hour the light of his life went out. He was young and rich and popular, and some said, handsome. But for him the world had lost its charm. What passed between him and the woman he loved as madly as you love, my son, only the God of heaven knows. It was a sacred hour, with no sin in it. Then Señora Nina went back to her villa near Madrid, and the young man found the only open door — the door of the sanctuary. He entered the priesthood of the holy church."

"What became of his wealth?" Gallego asked, eagerly.

"He put it away."

"In the church? How good of him! But by what name was he known in the holy orders?"

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"They called him, *Fra Padilla*," replied the priest quietly.

"Oh, Father Juan! Could that have been you?" cried Tristan, starting up and staring at the holy man.

"Sit down, Tristan. I have yet my message. The same old story is acted again in Spain. The letters bring me word tonight that Count Da Garda and Señorita Teresita are to be married on this Christmas Eve. Bear up, my son. I know your Teresita's heart is as true to you as my Nina's was true. Some power has overruled her own. Bear up. I have listened to the same story."

But Tristan had fallen forward, and lay in the strong arms of Father Padilla.

"Only," the priest continued, "I heard it from her own white lips. My son, when earthly loves fail us

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the love of the Son of the Blessed Virgin stands sure. The doors of the holy church close never against us. Come now to her altars and consecrate yourself as I have done.”

Tristan Gallego lifted his head and sat erect, staring out at the valley with eyes that saw nothing. The moon was full in the heavens now, and the richness of a semi-tropical night in all its weird beauty was about these two men with whom Fate had played so grimly. Long they sat together. Faint sounds of merry-making floated up from the little walled town, but neither heard them. At length the young man rose, and stood erect. Years seemed to have passed over his head since with springing step he had climbed to this height such a little while before. His face in the moonlight was hard and cold. The priest stood up beside

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him, taller by full two inches, broader and more powerfully built.

"You will come with me?" he asked.

Tristan turned his dry, burning eyes on the good man's face. When he spoke all the music had left his voice.

"I have only one aim in life. I must get money."

"And after that?"

"There is no 'after that.' I shall go with Coronado, not as I had meant. O God! that I might leave here all my memories of Spain. I shall not die nor wither away about the accursed altars." He laughed harshly. "I must be a man of action. I shall be rich, and power will be mine. I say curse the church for all the help it is to me." He ground his teeth in bitterness of spirit.

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The good father put a firm hand on Gallego's arm.

"Go to what lengths you will, my son, the holy sanctuary will still be before you, and a power beyond all you may hold will yet draw you upward. But your penance will be heavy.— Let us go down now. This is the first holy-night in your new life, but not your last, my boy, not your last."

The two went down together. In the heart of one was a growing love and pity; in the other's heart, a fiercely gathering hatred toward all the world.

At the western wall an Indian slave girl darted out of the shadow at their approach, and sprang toward the gateway. In her haste she tripped, and fell against young Gallego. As he caught her by the arm to lift her up her frightened face

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shone full in the moonlight. He stared down at it a moment, then hurled her toward the gate with all his might.

"She is one of the captives Friar Marcos brought back from the north. I've often seen her. But her eyes looked just then like Teresita's when her father drove me from his villa at Madrid. Why should even an Indian slave in the New World call up a high-born señorita of Old Spain! Shall I ever forget?"

"I have never forgotten," replied Padilla, "nor have I ever wished to forget."

"Good-night, Father," and Gallego strode through the gate without turning his head or asking for a blessing. The world had in it no peace and goodwill for him in that tragic hour of grief and loss.

"Good-night, Tristan," said Fra

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Padilla. He was bending over the girl where she had fallen by the gate. Lifting her gently, he questioned her in the broken Spanish that the Indians learned readily.

"Come, Natana, why were you beyond the walls at this hour?"

"Oh, Fra Padilla," returned the captive slave, in the same tongue, "I want my own people, far, far away." She waved her arm toward the north.

"You could never find them alone, Natana. You would perish in the desert. Come with me tonight."

"Oh, Father, take me to them. Take me to Isopete, my — my sweetheart, you would say it, Isopete. Natana is heavy-heart tonight."

"Come," said the Fra gently. "Some day I will take you, but not now. It may be I shall go north with Coronado. Then you may go with me."

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At the door of the church the two met Tristan, standing like a carved support of the archway. Inside the church chants were sounding, and dim candles cast a pale radiance on the crucifix and the image of the Virgin Madonna. Leading the slave by one hand and the proud crushed Tristan by the other, Fra Padilla passed into the church.

"Here," he said in voice of benediction, "is the anchor to your souls. Peace be with you."

Tristan Gallego turned only a grim face toward the holy altar, unsoftened by any line of tenderness, but the slave girl's wondering dark eyes were full of tears.

And so the Christmas Eve went by in Compostela three centuries and a half ago.



The Sword Among the Lone Sand-Dunes.

The first white speck on the western sea was made
by a Spanish sail,
And the first lone grave on the plains was dug beside
a Spanish trail.

JAMES W. STEELE.



Y the end of the Christmas festivities in all New Spain only one subject was talked of—the expedition to Quivira. Francesco Vasquez de Coronado, Governor of New Galicia, was rich and popular. His name alone, as commander, would have given prestige to the undertaking. The discovery of the Klondike mines, the California gold fever of '49, were mild and inane in their influence on the popular mind compared with the feverish excitement of that time. Mendoza's immense

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levy upon the province of New Spain for supplies and equipment almost bankrupted the public treasury. But nobody thought of complaining. It seemed a sin not to do more. Every day new demands were made and every day new stores poured into Mendoza's hands. To the viceroy it meant the quest of what should place him in rank with Cortez and Pizarro. It meant the fabulous increase of his provincial resources, and it meant the temporary removal from New Spain of many gay young spendthrifts to whom the New World had been a disappointment and through whose troublesome meddling uncomfortable reports were seeping into the king's ears across the sea.

To the young knights the expedition was the realization of their wildest dreams of adventure and

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fortune, release from debt, and a future of luxurious living. To the Commander, Coronado, there was a higher purpose than these in the effort. He was a Spanish patriot and a devout Catholic. The conquest of Quivira would enrich his king and extend the domain of the Church. In his heart he never doubted the future. Had not Pizarro followed the Indian southward and found fabulous wealth? And were not all the stories of Quivira alike—a land whose cities were paved with gold, whose palaces flashed with jewels, a land of barbaric splendor whose heathen peoples must be brought into the bounds of Christendom?

The expedition was to start from Compostela late in February. The two months between Christmas and this time were busy ones for Tristan

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Gallego. His equipment, like many another Spanish knight's, was paid for by money borrowed from the public treasury. In all Gallego's possessions only one weapon was his own—the sword of his father, Juan Gallego, which he had brought with him from Spain. How little he had cared for it save as his father's weapon in his first days in the New World.

“I shall hang it in the hall of my villa when I go home,” he had said to himself many times. The sword has little to do with a heart like mine, where love is supreme.”

The memory of all this was a mockery to him now. The 23rd of February, the day appointed for the starting, fell on Monday. On the Saturday night before, Pedro, the courier, had come again on his jaded little mule with messages from the

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Gulf towns. The sealed packet for Fra Padilla this time carried no message for others. On this Monday morning, before the gay cavalcade began its triumphal march to the north, Pedro, with secret messages from Fra Juan Padilla to men of power in Spain, was hurrying eastward over the rough way he had covered only two days before.

On this Monday morning Compostela was in gala dress. Every house had the flag of Spain flying over it. Bands of music beat the air. Crowds gathered in the streets and a joyous spirit filled all the place.

It was a splendid sight, that company that marched away from old Compostela on that February morning more than three hundred fifty years ago, with Francesco de Coronado at the head. Two hundred and sixty cavaliers, seventy foot-sol-

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diers, and a thousand Indian attendants, guides, body guards and serving-men. The sun shone down on gay-colored scarfs and polished steel armor and glittering swords. On the mules with their jeweled bridles and the tricked-out line of pack animals with their burdens of supplies.

Droves of lowing cattle, and flocks of bleating sheep, relays of supplies of every kind, had preceded the marching force, as with the magnificent display of an Old World pageant it swept out of the western gate and passed from view around the shoulder of the table-land.

As the gates closed behind the last of the cavalcade, an Indian girl sprang out between them. Quickly forcing her way into the midst of the company following, she was lost to view. Only the Indian slave captive, Natana, strong and useful,

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but — slaves were plenty — let her go.

One night, after many days of marching, Fra Padilla was sitting silently by his camp-fire. Crouching Indian fashion on the opposite side was Natana the slave girl. Suddenly Tristan Gallego appeared, and sat down beside the priest. Natana cowered in fear with her great black eyes fastened on the young man's face.

"Never fear, Natana," said the priest in the Indian tongue. "He has a sweetheart too, far away; like you, he is lonely."

Natana's eyes lost their terror, and a look of sympathy and intense interest swept over her face.

"Who is that accursed woman, Father?" asked Gallego. "There are scores of Indian women in this company, but always I see this one."

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“It is Natana, a Quiviran captive, Tristan. She has a lover up north. And she begged me to take her when we left Compostela. She is the brightest Indian I have ever known. Somehow she seems like our Spanish peasantry.”

Tristan gazed long into the eyes of Natana looking into his eyes as she sat beyond the smoldering fire. For the first time since the Christmas Eve his face softened by ever so faint a hint. At that moment a comradeship began between them in that invisible, unuttered compact of souls where the glance of the eye or the touch of the hand says what the mind may be long in framing into words.

“Be kind to her, Tristan. I am gentle with all lovers, else I had excommunicated you when you cursed the church. It may do your own

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heart good to have even a heathen captive to be good to."

"Her eyes are so like Teresita's," murmured Tristan under his breath. Fra Padilla did not hear, but he understood.

In the old Spanish manuscripts the story of that long and difficult journey toward Quivira is imperfectly told. Months went by before the force of Coronado had finally come to a halt in the pueblo village of Tewa. Months of slow grinding down of grandeur. Little by little the glitter was lost; luxury gave way to comfort only, and comfort was close now to necessity. The seven fabulous cities had proved to be only a mud-walled village. With the changes had grown a change of spirit. High hopes had fallen to grim determination, and ambition

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was turned to angry disappointment. It was a lawless band that the indomitable Coronado held rule over during the long cold winter in Tewa. The reckless vices and inhuman cruelty of the Spanish knights in that heathen land are by our twentieth-century standards too evil for printed words. In all this, Tristan Gallego, moody and hard-hearted, took little part. Though changed as night from day from the sunny-spirited, affectionate young man who had come a year before with fond hopes to the New World, a certain high-born sense of justice and honor controlled him. He would have crushed down to death whatever came between him and his one avaricious aim now, but he was not wantonly cruel.

In the idle days of slow marching and slow waiting, Tristan Gallego

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had had only one pastime. Natana, the servant of Fra Padilla, was the one soul in all that company besides the priest for whom he had a kind word. As a proud Spanish gentleman he ignored her, but as a broken-hearted lover her presence fed a gnawing hunger in his soul.

There was much for the Indian women to do in that expedition. All day long they labored. The heavy and light camp work fell on them, and they knew little of the commander and his associates, whose body servants were Indian men. It was only at night, when the work was done, that Natana came and sat by Fra Padilla's fire and listened to him and the handsome young knight, who sat late together. And sometimes the good father was called away, leaving Tristan and the girl alone. Then Tristan sat beside her

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and told her stories of the seas and of Old Spain beyond them. Sometimes his arms were about her and her great dark eyes looked innocently into his as she listened. Then he would kiss her good-night and call her his little heathen sister. Albeit the strength of her lithe arm was a match for his own. Then Natana would lie awake for hours looking up at the stars and longing for Isopete, while the hot tears washed her brown cheeks. But the daylight again saw only a grim Spanish knight in the front ranks, while far in the rear an Indian captive toiled at the tasks the women must perform.

One moonlit evening, out on the far Arizona plains, when Tristan had sat very late by Natana's side, she suddenly shivered as with fright.

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“What is it, little Pagan?” asked Tristan.

“I’m afraid of him, Good Heart.” This was the name she had given to Gallego.

“Afraid of whom?” queried Tristan.

“Of the guide you call ‘The Turk,’ who has been with us all this moon. He is to lead us to Quivira. He lives toward the sunrise. He came to me last night and wanted me to go away with him and be his woman in his tepee. He promised me gold and jewels and furs. He said he would lead you away from Quivira where you would be utterly lost. I told him I would tell you, and he held up a big knife. He said he hated you, Good-Heart; that you told lies on him to the great Coronado, and he wanted your scalp to

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hang in his tepee. Oh, Good-Heart! is your sword sharp?"

Gallego laughed softly, musically, as he was wont to do in sunny Spain, and held up his sword, the sword of his father, Juan Gallego.

"You see this sword, and its inscription,

NO ME SAQUES SIN RAZON.

NO ME ENBAINES SIN HONOR.

That means, 'Draw me not without reason. Sheath me not without honor.' There is no reason why I should draw it for this Turk, nor honor in running it through his heart. I believe he is a liar, and is deceiving the good Coronado. So thinks our other guide, a fine big Indian from the north. I cannot remember his name. He has been with us since we reached the plains, and to my mind he is more reliable than this Turk, who is a rascal.

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There is jealousy between them already. But I would not spoil my polished sword with the Turk. I'll choke him or grind him with my heel like a rattlesnake! Do not fear him, little sister." And Gallego gathered her close in his arms and kissed her.

When he rose to go he put one arm around Natana, and turned her face full to the moonlight. But it was of Teresita that he was thinking.

Out in the light, coiled behind a yucca plant, was the Indian guide, Turk. As Gallego strode past him he reared his head like a serpent about to strike. Involuntarily the Spaniard's hand sought his sword. It lay by the camp-fire where he had sat with Natana. With a quick spring he caught the powerful Indian by the throat with a grip like

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steel. The Indian writhed, gurgled and fell half strangled to the ground, where Gallego kicked him contemptuously aside.

"Here, Good Heart, is your sword. Will he kill you?" Natana had seen the struggle and had leaped to the Spaniard's side.

"Not he. I was just a second too ready. I do not need that sword for him. When I choke him again he will never wake up.—Here, you beast,—get you to your place."

The Turk turned a look of malignant hate upon Tristan and walked away. Under his breath he was muttering such vows of vengeance as only an Indian can make who has been disgraced before a woman he desires, and beaten by the physical cunning of an enemy.

"Little Pagan, keep you close among the women, away from Coro-

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nado's people. The Turk might do you harm. He is a snake, and will come to his own one of these days."

Again Gallego bade the Indian girl good-night, and for the first time he watched her till she had reached her own sleeping-place among the women and had rolled her blanket about her. Her dreams that night were of Isopete and the tepees by the river in the fertile lands far to the north.

The Turk had walked straight to the sleeping-place of Coronado's servants and guides. His moccasined feet made no noise as he passed among the prostrate forms. Pausing before the most powerfully built man among them, he stared down at him for many minutes.

"So you are Isopete of Quivira, who thinks I am leading these white monsters away from Quivira. You told me your Natana was a captive

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somewhere south and you might find her sometime through these men. You fool! Your Natana is here, an arrow-shot away. She will not come to you again. You must kill this Gallego for me, because he has stolen your Natana. And then I'll kill you because you are in my way. And Natana shall live in my tepee by the big river, far, far eastward in the deep forests."

So ran the cunning mind of the Turk. Presently he pulled lightly at Isopete's blanket. The big Indian sat up, wide awake, in a moment. The Turk silently motioned to him to follow. Isopete rose and glided after him. Some rods away from the camp a deep draw cut the ground. Behind its steep bank the two guides sat down, Indian fashion, in silence.

At length the Turk spoke. Even

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Isopete, with all an Indian's insight, caught no trick in his words.

"Your Natana is not south — she is here on the far side of the camp with the women."

Isopete sprang up eagerly.

"Sit, Isopete. You fool! Natana is not yours now. I saw her tonight, as I sat behind a yucca bush. That pale-face they call Gallego was with her. His arms around her, so." The Turk clasped the empty air dramatically. "And he kissed her many times. I heard him tell her of you, and she only clung to him. She is afraid you will take her from him. She will die first. I tried to tell her you were here, but this Gallego caught me, so."

The Turk's murderous fingers closed on Isopete's throat a moment.

"Does a Quivira brave love revenge? Is Quivira a coward? Watch.

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You will see them together. Don't let her see you. He will kill you — so." Again the fingers sought Isopete's bare throat. "You watch. Then you kill him. I will help you. But do not let Natana know you. She stays among the women. She serves that big Medicine-man Padilla, for he is good to every one. She has never been near this part of the camp. You know this Gallego. He is cruel. He hates all Indians and all Spanish too except that Medicine-man Padilla, and Natana. You polished his sword for him yesterday. Keep it bright, Isopete, for his own blood."

Isopete rose steadily. Not a feature gave expression to his thought. The old story, twice made in Spain, was writing itself out for him on these far-away plains of a desolate unknown land.

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"You are a liar," he said to the Turk in an even voice.

A look of cunning swept the Turk's face.

"Go and see yourself, you coward wolf of the prairie! Any night I can show you if Padilla is away. Beware of Padilla. He is more than man. But kill this Gallego, or go pound maize in the tepees with the women."

The summer of 1541 dragged out its hours. Day by day Coronado's company found itself weaker, farther from home and supplies, and facing ever a wider and more desolate plain,— a never-ending monotony of weariness and starvation, beyond which lay — Quivira. To Coronado they were days of grim pursuit of a losing purpose. To the knights they were days of accursed failure and despair. To Gallego they were what all

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his future promised — a blank waiting for his sole desire — gold. To the captive girl they were filled with longing for the green valleys of Quivira, and for Isopete. The guides found hours of misery and hate. Only Fra Juan Padilla possessed his soul in peace and kept his hand in the right hand of God.

For all his declaration, the Turk's poison had done its work on Isopete. The cunning Indian had found time to spy upon Gallego. Brown as the brown earth, he had lain near the red fire unnoted and had watched Gallego bid good-night to his little heathen sister, not as a brother says good-night, but as a fond lover who lingers to give a gentle word and a caressing touch to lip and brow.

Though Quivira lay to the north, the Turk led the little band steadily eastward. He avoided Gallego, for

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the Indian is an inherent coward before a superior race. But no motion of Natana's was lost to him. And as he was a craven before the knight, he was a braggart before the girl.

"We shall be so far from Quivira they will all perish," he had boasted to Natana. "Then you will go with me to where the forests are full of shade and no more deserts are anywhere. If you but say one little word of this to that pale-face in armor, I'll kill him before you."

So the Turk threatened, and Natana, fearing for the Spaniard, kept her counsel, till at length she dared to risk fate in her fear and trouble. Sitting at the feet of Fra Padilla one night after a wearisome day of toiling over barren wastes, she told him all the Turk's story.

"Go, good Father, to Coronado and tell him tonight. The Turk will

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kill Good Heart if you wait till tomorrow." So pleaded Natana.

"Tell me, my child," said Padilla, looking steadily at her face, "is it for him you would do this, or do you want Quivira and your lover?"

"I would save Good Heart," replied the girl simply, "but I — want — my Isopete. Father, shall I never see Quivira again?"

Fra Padilla led Natana away to the tent of Coronado. Sitting with him were Tristan Gallego, and a score of other Spaniards. Crouching outside the door were the two guides. In the simple words of the lowly faithful the girl made known to the commander the whole perfidious plan of the wily guide.

"Why do you tell me all this?" queried Coronado. "You are a captive now. If we were lost you might be free."

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"To save his life," said Natana, pointing to Gallego. "He is good to me."

"Oh, ho! said the commander with a smile.

"Like any other woman, she is concealing her real love," Padilla thought to himself.

Outside the tent the Turk laughed softly, but the other guide stood erect and still as stone. The council dismissed Natana, who beyond the tent door came face to face with Isopete. She did not cry out nor faint. She was true Indian. But she stretched out her arms imploringly, her face full of joy.

Isopete folded his own across his broad chest and looked down at her coldly.

"So this is how I find you, Natana, begging for the life of a white man. Go to him. I want you no

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more. I guide this company northward now. When we reach Quivira, see what comes then."

"Have you been long here, Iso-pete?"

"Days and days and days."

"Why did you stay away from me?"

"I did not want you," said Iso-pete coldly; and without another word he strode toward his commander's tent.

At sunrise next day a new order began. Almost a year and a half had slipped by since Coronado's band had begun its march, wildly believing that conquest and wealth and honor were only a few weeks ahead. On this May morning only thirty resolute men, a handful of Indian servants and the good priest Padilla set out alone to find Quivira, the vanishing land of their ambition's

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dreams. The remainder of the company who had withstood the hard life of the desert plains turned back to await their commander's return in the Tewa pueblo beyond the Rio Grande.

Sad and moody were those thirty men, clinging to a forlorn hope. Day after day they moved northward. At the head of the marching column was Isopete, the big Quivira guide. The Turk, guarded and in chains, was a disgraced captive now, whose fate was foretold by Gallego when he said:

"When I choke you again you will never wake up."

Natana still clung to Fra Padilla. She had no joy in Quivira without her loved Isopete, but there was nowhere else for her to go now. And the Christ whom Padilla had taught to her became a reality here. In her

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hopelessness and sorrow the hold on
His love who had also suffered was
her strength.

Where the Cimarron river bends
to the north, leaving an arc of its
course inside the bounds of Kansas,
to the southward dip of the wide
Arkansas wandering aimlessly away
to the east, there are today great
stretches of grazing-lands, cut here
and there with fields of alfalfa and
wheat and forage. Three hundred
years and more ago, when Coronado's
thirty knights on lean and hungry
mules came riding hither, there was
here little more than sand-dunes,
yucca and loco plants and straggling
wild plum bushes. Eagerly these
men sought for a fertile land and the
spires of splendid cities. Wearily
the days dragged on, and only sand
and glaring sunshine, and the monot-

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ony of an unbroken horizon-line made up the landscape. Like the snow-blindness of the frozen Yukon valley became this yellow blistering flare to the eyes of the straggling train.

And then one day late in June across the flat sandbars of this wide eastward-going river the white tents of an Indian village shone through the thin branches of a cottonwood grove.

Isopete leaped at the sight, and gave one long weird cry that sounded far across the wilds.

"This is Quivira," he exclaimed, falling at the feet of Coronado. "These are my people come to the bounds of our land to hunt. There are our tepees, with white skin covers Two days, three days, maybe, and we shall be in the heart of Quivira."

The Spanish commander stood si-

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lent beside his tired steed, with eyes intent on the fertile stretch of prairie that seemed to lap over the edge of the north in its level sweep. Beside him stood Juan Padilla, and beyond the priest was the Indian girl, whose dark eyes were full of pathos. A little farther away Tristan Gallego sat on his mule. Behind him were the others of the company in broken array.

Coronado lifted high his sword, and spoke reverently:

"In the name of the King of Spain I claim this land, its people, its wealth, and all its increase, now and for all future years."

Fra Juan Padilla raised his right hand, the sacred crucifix held high above him.

"In the name of the Holy Church, in the name of the Saviour who died upon the Cross," he said solemnly,

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"I claim the souls of this people, this land, its wealth and all its increase that shall build here a kingdom for all eternity. Now and forever I baptize it no more heathen, but Christian. Amen!"

Tristan Gallego had dropped from his steed and stood a moment beside Natana. Pushing her gently aside, with such a touch as one would give a pet dog, he stood beside Padilla. The motion was not lost on Isopete. He stepped behind the girl and in a low voice he said in his cold even tone of anger:

"Stay you close by the good man. We are in Quivira now. Keep to the priest if you would save yourself."

Natana turned a startled face toward the guide. Love, fear, courage and self-sacrifice were all in that face. It stirred the bitter brooding heart of Isopete. Almost he relented.

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But that gentle act of Gallego's held him back. He had seen the wanton brutality of Spanish gentlemen toward Indian women; too much had he seen in this long journey. Gallego's touch could mean only love and protecting care for Natana. The Turk was right. Curse him!

In her simple heart Natana had hoped that Quivira would soften Isopete's heart toward her. She did not know she had hoped till now on the edge of the promised land he was still bitter and unloving.

The daily service of the camp for Fra Padilla had taught her much of civilization in addition to what she had learned in Compostela. She was far from being a mere ignorant savage now, and she began to see deeper into Isopete's heart than he saw himself.

"You will know some day, Iso-

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pete," she said in a gentle voice. "I can wait. All women learn to wait."

The camp-fires that night burned at the base of a huge rock cliff whose perpendicular face stood out boldly above the river that wound around its edges. On the opposite side it sloped steeply down into the plain. A strange stone outcrop it was in this open prairie, destined to stand out through many coming years as a landmark and point of historic fame. Christened later from the fierce fight of the wild Panis, it gained the name it was destined to keep for all future time, the well-known name of PAWNEE ROCK.

On this clear starlit night Tristan Gallego's mind was full of unbidden memories. Months of bitterness and hardship and disappointment had not driven Teresita from his mind, and life was before him. He seemed to

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have been thinking through all these months that life would all be done with when he had reached Quivira. He could not endure himself alone. Seeking out Natana, he led her away to the crest of the cliff of rock, where the two sat down in the dim light with their faces toward the steep perpendicular front above the river.

“See, Natana, what a citadel this is. Ten men could fight back a hundred here. It is Nature’s own fortress. In the years to come, when the people of Europe shall have overruled the desert, there will be many a tragedy about this rock. The hostile tribes could not reach them here, nor would their arrows match the white man’s guns.”

“But where would the white man get water?” asked Natana.

“Sure enough, little Pagan, where

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would he? If I were held here would you bring me water?"

"I would save you, Good Heart."

A quick movement behind them, and over the shoulders of each a lasso was deftly thrown, binding the arms of each down in a moment. With a lightning swiftness Gallego's feet were tied, and with a shove his body was hurled over the edge of the rock.

The next moment Natana was caught up in Isopete's strong arms and borne swiftly down the slope. Once only his lips pressed her lips as he hurried on.

"Natana, Natana, I had to get him away. I cannot live in Quivira with him here."

For one brief moment Natana was in heaven. Isopete did care for her, had dared for her. Then she struggled to free herself.

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"You have killed Good Heart, Isopete. Go find him. Coronado will kill you."

Isopete laughed.

"The Turk broke from his shackles tonight. Coronado will say the Turk did it. The Turk must die anyhow."

"I will tell Coronado."

"Do," sneered the Indian, "and I'll say you did it. He remembers how you spoke for Gallego against the Turk. He knows an Indian slave does sometimes hate a Spaniard who trifles with her."

Isopete had slipped the rope off her arms and placed Natana on her feet. As he caught her up again a hand stronger than his own seized him and Fra Padilla held him in a grip like iron. Natana caught the priest's arms.

"Let him go, Father, let him go," she pleaded.

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"All women are alike," murmured Padilla as his hold loosened, and Isopete glided away.

Then Natana fell at the feet of the priest.

"Oh, Father, Good Heart is killed. He fell over the edge of the rock."

All women *are* alike, else Natana had told the whole truth then.

"Where, where, my child?" In all these months the girl had never seen Padilla white and terror-smitten as now.

Together they hastened up the steep ascent, and Natana pointed to the place where Gallego had been pushed off the precipice. Some distance down in the crevice of a sharp angle formed by a slight shelf of rock a small clump of cottonwood brush had rooted stubbornly and grown with the sturdy defiance of that heroic tree, the pioneer of the

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plains. Into this clump Gallego had crashed, and with such grip as he could keep, his arms bound at the elbows, he clung to the rock with desperate grasp.

Fra Padilla peered over the top of the rock and listened.

"He is not dead. He is caught down there. I hear him groaning. Run, Natana, and bring me a rope. We can save him. Tristan! Tristan!" he called, "hold on a little longer."

Natana hastened to where Isopete had unbound her arms, and catching up the long lariat she fled up the steep ascent again. Father Padilla bound the rope about her waist and lowered her carefully down to where Gallego's body was caught. The shelf of rock was very narrow, and already his hands were numb from the grip, but to lose his hold meant a fall of many

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feet to the broken rocks below. It took all of Natana's agility to drag Gallego's sword from its sheath, and, keeping her hold on the rocky ledge, to cut his bonds. Then she fastened the rope that held her around his body, and called to the priest to draw him up.

Fra Padilla was a man of giant strength, but it took all his cunning to bring the half-dead form to the top of the rock.

"My son, my dear, dear son," he cried as he stretched Gallego on the ground. "You must not die. I could never forgive myself the penance I put on you."

Gallego groaned aloud, then tried to rise.

"Where is the little Pagan?" he asked.

The priest caught his breath.

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"I had forgotten her. She is down there."

"Not dead?" gasped Gallego.

"No, no. I sent her after you. I'll lower the rope to her."

Carefully weighting the end of the rope with a fragment of stone, he lowered it to Natana on the angle below. The girl bound it under her arms, and, bruised and sore, reached the top. In her hand she held the sword.

"I wish I might have run it through the villain who threw me over," said Gallego.

"I wish you had lost it down there," said Padilla. "So long as you make it your strength you shut out God's power from your heart."

"I hope he may never know whose heart his sword missed tonight," thought Natana. In her own heart hope was born anew. Isopete did

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love her, else why should he have dared so much tonight? The hope was coupled with dread of danger to Gallego, for whom she would have died, and fear of the result of such danger to Isopete, whom she believed now would die for her.

The three rested a while on the rock's crest, and then, with a prayer such as never the night air about that lone rock had heard before in all its misty centuries of time, the priest blessed his two children, and leading each by the hand, the proud Spanish knight and the humble Indian slave, they passed down to the sleeping camp and sought their resting-places.



The Prince of Peace on Prairies Wide.

Christ's love rebukes home-love,
Breaks no tie of kin apart.

Better heresy in doctrine
Than heresy of heart."

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.



HERE is left only one thing more to be done." It was Francesco de Coronado who spoke in counsel with his knights.

"We must go to the end of Quivira, and then — return to New Spain."

He said these words as men speak to whom the ambition of a lifetime has brought only heartbreaking loss. He spoke courageously. And yet the real hardship of all this long excursion of failure and ruin was the return to Mendoza's court, to be

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humiliated, and for all future years plunged into poverty and obscurity.

The land of Quivira lay like a garden of Eden, as matched against the sand-dunes of the dreary Southwest. Northward to the fertile valley of the river to be some day known as the Smoky Hill, they journeyed. All hope of gold had vanished in this fat black soil. Eastward for a time they took their way, to where the river joined another as large as itself and rolled away in one broad, beautiful sweep down a valley of wild loveliness. In years to come this valley of the Kaw would yield its treasures to him who should conquer the land itself, and find its gold, not in stubborn rocks in deep dark mines; but in the gold of growing grain, the wealth of the earth's increase to him who will sow by its waters.

In Old Quivira

It is no wonder the people of Quivira loved their land. They digged in its soil and planted the seeds of pumpkin and beans and maize. They made snug lodges, of strong poles tied together with limber willow withes, and overlaid with heavy sod. They had warm furs for clothing and blankets. They ate the juiciest venison and buffalo meats. They had Indian pudding, dried plums and grapes, and the kernels of wild nuts that had sweetened in the sun and frost of long rare autumn days. They were brave and free, and strong and faithful; and Coronado, who was of nobler spirit than the spirit of his mother country, left them as he found them, unharmed by the evil touch of a corrupt civilization. Almost a score of months he spent in reaching Quivira. He remained in the king-

In Old Quivira

dom hardly more than a score of days, passing, before his return, to its farthest eastern limit.

And all this time there was but one soul in the expedition to whom the call of the prairie sounded clear and sweet. Fra Juan Padilla, who had renounced the world in the day of his greatest military achievement, felt that here he should come into his own for all his earthly days. He was now the happiest, busiest man in all Quivira. His commanding presence, his gentle touch, his dark keen eyes, his sweet smile, and his sincere love for all men as his own brothers, made his days full of benediction in this far heathen land. The simple-hearted Quivirans came to him like a flock to its shepherd, and he did not fail them.

And where all this time was the Turk who had led the band almost

In Old Quivira

to its utter ruin? For one night his chains had been removed and he had obtained a brief freedom. He had easily eluded the guards and had made the hours of freedom pay him to the full. It was he who had started Isopete up the rock to find Gallego and Natana together. Then he had passed quickly among the Quivira people, whose hunting-tents Coronado had so recently found in the cottonwood grove. He told his own story, showed his calloused wrists and ankles chafed by the cruel chains. That their fate would be like his he easily put as a suggestion into their minds, and left it to grow there. And, cunningest of all, he forced upon them the need for keeping Isopete bitter toward the Spaniards. In that alone, done secretly and unknown to the big guide, he assured them their whole safety

In Old Quinira

lay. But his master-stroke was made when he begged one day for Gallego to come to him. In a well-feigned penitence for his own misdeeds he sought to redeem himself by an act of loyalty to Gallego. Isopete, he assured the young knight, was lying in wait for him. Would try to kill him. Would try and try.

“For,” said the smooth scoundrel, “he told me himself he would push you over the great rock the night we lay at its feet. He must have been afraid to try, for here you are, but it was his plan. If he failed, then he will try something else. I have warned you.”

“So,” said Tristan, “it was the faithful guide who did me that wicked turn. And why?”

Then the Turk played his last trick.

In Old Quivira

"Because you love his Natana," he hissed.

"But I don't," said Gallego.

The Turk ground his teeth.

"Then why do you not leave her alone?"

Gallego turned without another word and left him.

"It is well for all of us that man is not free," he said to himself. And then the human nature in him came uppermost. He forgot the Turk's scheming nature.

"What is there left for me in this world anyhow?" he said in excuse to himself. "I may as well have this little Quivira pagan for my own. Isopete would finish me, and the Turk would kill us both if he could. Why not end it all, and get Father Juan to bless us? She has risked her life for me. So would she again. Sometimes I've seen her

In Old Quivira

standing by the Father when she seemed a very queen in this wild land. Why should I not be a king, her king? Teresita is lost."

The groan that followed showed how deep and incurable was that hidden wound. A longing for the old life, for Seville, and the music of moonlit nights; for the splendor of the Moorish castles, and the solemn chimes of old cathedral bells; a wave of homesick anguish swept his soul.

"I will put it all by forever," he muttered. "I'll marry this dear little heathen and take her away somewhere for my own. If she is such a prize to these two rogues they would do away with me, she must be worth all she costs."

And then, because Natana did not seek him, but dreamed of Isopete and waited for his sure return,

In Old Quivira

Gallego began to watch for her coming and going. She was doubly attractive now because she did not think of him save as one she would protect. The Turk was no longer to be feared. She was in her own land again, and life was sweet and full of promise to her. A low song was on her lips, the song that speaks of deepest happiness now, and softens only a little by-and-by into the crooning lullaby for blessed babyhood. So ran the days of that midsummer in Quivira long ago.

Then suddenly there came an outbreak, a revolt, and that little band of adventurous men were face to face with treachery, riot and violence. The time was well chosen. Coronado had gone for a two-days journey to the northeast. Father Padilla was miles to the west, ad-

In Old Quivira

ministering to a little village stricken with an epidemic.

Tristan Gallego, left in command, was thinking only of Natana, and smiling grimly as he saw the burning black eyes of Isopete watching him. Back of it all was the Turk, whose helplessness had gradually won the Quiviran people to pity, then to exaltation. He used Isopete as his weapon, for the guide was trusted everywhere, and was strong and skillful.

With no blare of noise the camp was suddenly surrounded, and in a terse declaration of war Isopete put himself at the head of the command. Gallego was seized, and thrust, bound and under guard, into Coronado's tent. The remaining knights, surprised and leaderless, were easily overcome,—and the

In Old Quivira

power of Spain lay at the mercy of a savage foe.

Before pursuing the cause to completion as the Turk urged, Isopete sought Natana. She was not at Padilla's tent. Then he hurried to Coronado's tepee. She was not there. Over the entire camp he searched. She was nowhere to be found. Isopete forgot his command, and sat moodily alone. Messengers from the Turk failed to move him, and there was the strange condition of contending forces, each lacking a commander. At daybreak Isopete roused himself to action.

"Let us slaughter all of them at sunrise," was his word that was borne from brave to brave; and everything was put in readiness.

That was the grandest August sunrise that ever shone on Kansas. The folds of a morning mist, shot

In Old Quivira

through with a purple glory that tinted into crimson, rolled back in waves of splendor before the great pageant of light that swung up the eastern sky. The earth was one glistening sheen of dewdrops, and all the sweet air of morning was shimmering with reflected color.

Down in the little camp all this beauty was lost. To the captive Spaniard its coming meant the agony of death in a dreary land. To the captors it meant a bloody victory, foul and awful in its every part.

Just as the sun rose clear of the horizon-line, there swept across the camp a cry of mingled joy and pleading. It was a woman's voice, Natana's. And down into the very midst of the angry Indians strode Father Padilla, with swift, strong steps. Never so like a giant had he seemed before. His dark eyes burned

In Old Quivira

with the fire of power. In his right hand was the crucifix. Alone, unarmed, he came among them, and in the strength of his heroism they lost their might.

“On earth, peace; goodwill toward men.” How full and rich his voice was! Like the balm of deep melodious music it fell upon the ears of victors and victims. The Quivira Indians fell at his feet, pleading for his blessing. From the hearts of the knights the weight of an awful peril was lifted. In an hour the camp was in order, and the noontide welcomed the return of Coronado. Everything fell into its place except this: No longer must the Turk be kept alive, and with him Isopete must perish. It was Coronado’s order, and he was commander there.

“But Isopete is your best guide,”

In Old Quivira

urged Fra Padilla, "and the Turk has been his undoing."

"What say you, Gallego?" questioned Coronado.

"Kill him, by all means; choke him with the Turk. I wish they were done for now."

And the hour of midnight was agreed upon.

In the long August afternoon the priest led Tristan away to the shade of a tall cottonwood tree growing huge and rank above the river-bank.

"Tristan Gallego," said the priest slowly, "two days more and we shall be at the end of Quivira. Then we turn back. You are young — only twenty-seven. The years are before you. Your sorrow has been deep. Your life has been snatched from certain death many times. I love you as if you had been my own son.

In Old Quivira

Tell me why you condemn this Indian guide. Tell me only the truth."

Gallego looked straight into the priest's eyes.

"Because he loves Natana. And I am coming to you tomorrow to ask you to bless us, the little girl and me. I want her myself now."

"Tristan Gallego, you shall not condemn to death that you alone may be safe. There is no safety save in the Prince of Peace. You loved Teresita Morello?"

Tristan's hands clenched.

"Oh, more than my life, good Father."

"Would you have had her marry one she did not love?"

"No, never, never."

"My son, Natana does not love you. She has saved your life twice, even many times more although you knew it not. Yet in the outbreak

In Old Quivira

yesterday she left you to your fate and came all the long miles to find me that I might come and save Isopete. He was free and you imperiled. Yet it was of him she thought. Would you take her from him?"

"Oh, Father, the little girl is dear to me, and with her alone can I forget Spain."

"Selfish still! Is not your heart yet ready? My son, you cursed the church that last Christmas Eve in Compostela. You have been made to suffer in all this long journey; more than you thought or dreamed has the church laid heavy hand on you. Will you take from Isopete what Da Garda took from you?"

Tristan Gallego stood up to his full height. The hard bitter spirit was gone in that moment, and a chastened gentleness came into his eyes.

In Old Quivira

"What shall I do?"

"Go to Coronado and secure the release of Isopete."

"Then the Quiviran will run me through with my own sword if he can before midnight."

"You must give him your sword to prove, not him, but yourself."

"Let me think, let me think," Gallego pleaded.

"Well, meet me here at sunset." A gentle hand-clasp, and then the tall priest stooped and kissed the young man's forehead, and so left him.

"Wherein does his real power lie?" queried Tristan. "Is it that God can make a man like that whose heart was crushed as mine has been? The sword of Coronado cannot do here what that man's love can win. Nay, I believe the king of Spain himself would be impotent

In Old Quivira

before this ambassador of the Prince of Peace whom he serves."

And then Tristan Gallego lifted his right hand to heaven, and in a deep wordless petition he prayed. To the ear of heaven his pleading ran:

"I, Tristan Gallego, give up here this only pleasure, my fondness for a poor Indian girl, because I may not keep it. I give her lover back to her, and go my way, bravely now if only I may hold to thee, O pitying God, and trust thee for what the years shall bring."

At the sunset hour Tristan and Isopete stood by the river's brink. Its yellow waters rolled ceaselessly by. The valley below was quiet in the blessed hush of a late summer day. The western sky was a sea of glass mingled with fire, and all the wide plains of Kansas lay tranquil

In Old Quivira

and beautiful in their grand solitude.

Isopete's dark eyes were full of hate as he came face to face with his rival. With the grace of a Spanish gentleman Gallego came forward.

"Isopete," he said, "you should be killed tonight at midnight, for you deserve to die. And yet you have been a brave, true guide. It was only your love for a girl that turned your heart against the white man. I could keep her from you, for I am stronger than you. My word can save you or put you to death before tomorrow's sunrise. You are swift and cunning. Should you live you could find a way to end my life. Let us both live. I have spoken for you to Coronado. He will not destroy you. And you are free. But more than this"—the young man stepped forward to Isopete—

In Old Quivira

"here is my sword. I am unarmed. No one will see us in this place. You can kill me here if you wish, but I do not fear you. The power Fra Padilla teaches is become my strength."

Isopete took the sword. Its glittering blade was temptingly ready. He fingered it softly.

"Keep it, Isopete. I do not want it again." He spoke simply, as though he had bestowed a trifling trinket upon a friend. "You will never draw it without reason. And here I prove to you I take away all reason why you should draw it against me."

Fra Padilla and Natana had come softly behind Isopete at that moment, and now the priest led the girl to her lover's side.

Natana was beautiful to the eyes of all there as she stood in the even-

In Old Quimira

ing light. The sunset beyond her sent long level rays of radiance across the landscape. The sky seemed to bend down in loving benediction, and the softest of floating pink clouds hung like bridal drapery about the east, decking the great marriage-hall of Nature. Natana's long black hair hung in two heavy braids about her shoulders; her richly beaded skirt, her bright blanket, and her brown face lighted by glorious dark eyes, seemed somehow the only type of woman who could grace that picture. So a part of it all she was.

"Isopete, I give thee this little sister for thy own. I was so fond of her," his lip trembled, "and she was good to me."

He turned without another word and strode away. A mist was before his eyes, and Natana's sympathetic

In Old Quivira

face was changing to the face of a beautiful Spanish girl who wore for the first time in all his pictures of her, such a look of pleading he groaned aloud.

“Oh, Teresita, Teresita, have I wounded you by my folly? It is all over now.”

And in the gray evening shadows he sought his tent to pray.

Before the sun rose the next morning the forlorn little band took up its last eastward pilgrimage. For two days the march continued. The way was pleasant, for Nature had blessed the valley with all the beauty of a wild rich land, where even in late midsummer the grasses grew lush and green, and a thousand golden blossoms bent before the soft rippling breezes that poured over them like the waves of an invisible sea. The heat of the day was piti-

In Old Quivira

less, but the nights were calm and clear and cool. Gone out of all hope were the barbaric cities with their pagan temples and jewel-tricked idols. The march held nothing more than the fulfillment of the mere declaration that they had gone to the end of Quivira.

In the late afternoon of the second day the company passed to the top of a low divide between two northward-flowing streams that emptied into the great river. Its slopes were soft with grass, but on the crest was a stunted herbage. A few rectangular blocks of stone were here, and many a pink boulder brought hither by the old glacier of a bygone era of time. Beyond the farther slope the river stretched like a spread of molten steel toward the vanishing east. And everywhere as though they stood in the very center of the

In Old Quivira

universe, there unrolled before their eyes a new heaven and a new earth such as no artist will ever cast on canvas.

“Oh, it is magnificent!” said Fra Padilla as he stood upon the crest of the divide and drew in a deep breath of the cool summer air. “Was there ever a land so beautiful as this? The peace of God is everywhere. Shall there ever come hither a nation who will love it for itself, and grow strong and free in this strong free realm? Will there ever be a Sabbath here, and the benediction of the Almighty fall upon a reverent people?”

Coronado stood beside the good man with folded arms and set white face.

Isopete approached, and touched his hand.

“This, good Coronado, is the end of Quivira. All that lies beyond this

In Old Quivira

ridge is the land of other tribes. We are at peace with them, but we go not thither except for cause."

Coronado bowed his head. He murmured, "This then is the end of our journey, the ending of our hopes and dreams and high ambitions and earnest prayers. We have done what we could, and there remains nothing more for us here. Only God Omnipotent knows how and when these lands shall be discovered and for whom He has guarded this good fortune."

Long the brave commander stood, as one may stand by the bier where lies the form that has held the life that was dearest to him. Then with his own hands he gathered together a store of pink boulders about a block of limestone that lay on the highest point. Slowly and patiently he built upon this base a rude stone

In Old Quivira

cross, its yellow-gray form contrasting in color with the heaps of round pink stones piled about it. Then slowly he etched deep in the base of the cross the inscription:

“FRANCESCO VASQUEZ DE CORONADO,
GENERAL OF THE ARMY,
ARRIVED HERE.”

All the heart-break of a lost life-ambition was in that rude inscription, all the longing for remembrance, all the dread of oblivion.

The company slept that night at the foot of the slope. When they pitched their tents at the close of the next day they were many miles to the southwest.

By a much shorter route than the wicked Turk had led them Isopete guided the Spaniards straight away toward Tewa, where the remainder of Coronado's band awaited their return.

In Old Quivira

On the second day's journey toward home they passed the spot where the bones of the Turk were to moulder in a nameless grave. Tristan Gallego with Fra Padilla lingered by it for a brief time. A strangely tender feeling came to the young knight's heart. Taking from his neck a small ivory cross, he buried it deep in the dry clods of the grave.

"Poor wretch!" he murmured. "How many lives are wrecked by evil guides. God pity him."

Fra Padilla lifted his hands in silent prayer for the soul of the Turk, and then he turned to Gallego.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

He spoke the words with the reverent grace that made all his utterances like benedictions.

The two stood still a moment

In Old Quivira

longer, and then they hastened on to the little band straggling bravely toward the southwest.



Christmas Morning in Quivira.

“And when the Angel of Shadow
Rests his feet on wave and shore,
And our eyes grow dim with watching
And our hearts faint at the oar,

“Happy is he who heareth
The signal of his release
In the bells of the Holy City,
The chimes of eternal peace.”

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.



T was early autumn when Coronado's company, ragged, worn, browned by a fierce September sun, and crushed with a sense of failure and impending degradation, reached the mud-walled village of Tewa. From this point they had no further need for Isopete, and he tarried only briefly; for his heart was in Quivira with Natana. His grief at parting with Fra Padilla was pitiful.

In Old Quivira

"Come, come back with me," he wailed. "Natana wants you. All my people want you. There are scores and scores of holy men down that way," pointing toward the south. "Come where there is not one. You have no wife, no child, no home. You never will have. Come and guide us from the kingdom of Quivira to the kingdom of Heaven."

Tristan Gallego stood by Fra Padilla.

"Why, neither have I any of these, Isopete," he said gently.

Isopete fell at his feet, and drawing the sword Gallego had given him from his belt, he held it up in offering.

"Take your sword, good Spaniard. Go fight and win many lands. It is a beautiful sword. Isopete loves it, for you gave it to him. Take it again."

In Old Quivira

Gallego gently put down his hand.

"Keep the sword. I shall never fight for lands. Keep it so long as you let it hang in your tepee the sign between us that we would save life, not seek to destroy it. May it rest and rust in your beautiful Quivira many long years, the symbol only of a life that was."

Father Padilla put both arms lovingly around the young Spaniard.

"My son, my son, you are ready now. Your penance is ended. You would not curse the church now."

"God forbid," said Gallego in deep reverence.

Padilla's face shone with a beauty such as the old masters would put into the faces of the Apostles.

"Now I may go where my heart leads me. The call of the plains is in my ears. The lure of that vast solemn land, that beautiful solitude,

In Old Quivira

is strong upon me. I must go again to Quivira. To the uttermost parts of the earth the blessed gospel must be borne. And into my hands is it given to carry it thither. Isopete, I shall return with you when you depart tomorrow. From henceforth my way leads me from the haunts of civilized men, but not from the abode of needy human souls. Always I shall see the spires of the beautiful cathedrals of Spain, and the candles and the holy altars. And always will the chime of cathedral bells sound in my ears; but I shall go to where these things may never be for me. I must walk in a way where later the feet of many a holier man than I shall run with ease and find all these tokens of men's genius and power. What I must do I must do. No man may

In Old Quivira

read another's duty to him so clearly as he may read it for himself.

"Go, now, Isopete. Tomorrow together we shall journey forth again toward the land of the sunrise, toward our Quivira. Yours and mine — and His."

He pointed toward the crucifix in his hand.

When Isopete had gone, Tristan Gallego sat with bowed head.

"You are right, good Father," he said. "No man may read another's duty so clearly as he can read it for himself. I thought myself strong. Oh, Father, what shall I do without you?"

And then Fra Padilla stood up before his young friend with a joy in his face such as Tristan had never seen on any face before.

"Let us go where the air is cool, my boy. I have a message for you."

In Old Quivira

Involuntarily the memory of the same words from Father Padilla nearly two years before came with a start to Tristan. The two sat down outside the village wall and looked out over the wide Arizona plain.

"When I came to you with a message once, Tristan Gallego, you cursed the church in the bitterness of your soul. It was bitterness and not real blasphemy that moved you, I knew it then; and yet one must not curse, even in bitterness. At the altar that night I vowed a penance on you. It came sooner than I had thought. I am ready tonight to release you. Listen, Tristan. On the Saturday night before we left Compostela, Pedro the courier brought me letters from Old Spain. The news of one I could hardly have kept but for my vow, so great was my love for you. But you had sinned.

In Old Quivira

The letter told how Count Da Garda had been killed three days before Christmas by a fall from the window of his high tower. Too much wine. But the letter said further, that Teresita Morello had utterly refused to wed him. That may have added to his already too greedy appetite for wine. Furthermore, this Teresita declared she would never wed save where her heart was wedded too; that is, to Tristan Gallego."

Tristan clasped the Father's hand, but uttered no sound.

"You were poor, Tristan, and proud, and — you had cursed the Holy Church. You could not have gone to her poor. Coronado's expedition seemed to offer you gold. But for your sin you must not know of this love till you had proved yourself. I sent Pedro post-haste on the morning we left Compostela to the

In Old Quivira

coast towns with messages for the first ship. For Teresita, and — for my friend whom you do not know.”

The good man paused, as one who hesitates to reopen a sad and sacred past.

“You remember, my boy, the story I told you of the soldier who became a priest?”

“Yes, Father,” said Gallego in a low voice.

“The Nina whom he loved was married to Francesco Morello, and her daughter is Teresita Morello. When the young commander renounced the world he did not put his fortune, which was large, into the church. I said ‘he put it away.’ Instead of losing control of it, he gave it into a banker’s hands in trust. The friend to whom I sent letters by Pedro was this banker. The fortune and its increase was to

In Old Quivira

revert to the daughter of Nina Morello if she should wed the man of her choice, unless I chose to alter the bequest myself. I did alter it. I gave this friend my last order before I left Compostela, in the letter Pedro took away. It was that one Tristan Gallego, on his return to Spain, should have this fortune entire and untrammelled when he should marry Teresita Morello. Should she die, or wed another, the money was still his own; but should he prove untrue to the child of my loved dead Nina, then the money should go into the coffers of the Holy Church.

“Tomorrow morning”— the priest spoke now in a voice whose low melody was full of sweetness —“Tomorrow morning I shall bid you good-bye forever. Every hardship of the life before me will be softened to ease by the thought of your new life

In Old Quivira

in Spain, and my one earthly joy will be your happiness, and hers,—the little Teresita who waits for you in the vine-draped gardens of Seville.”

Tristan Gallego had known Father Padilla too long and well to misunderstand him now. To try to persuade him to renounce the wilderness and return to Spain would have been useless.

There are moments in life whose emotions no word may express. Down all the long years to the day of his death, Tristan Gallego never lost the inspiration of the last hand-clasp and unspoken benediction of Fra Padilla, when the two bade each other good-by on the lonely sun-swathed plains of Arizona.

In the harbor of San Lucar the good ship Santa Carina had been

In Old Quivira

long due, and now it was the Christmas-time again. In the churches the candles burned and chants were sung and masses were said. All Spain was in its holiday spirit. And yet one heart in Seville was heavy this Christmastide. Teresita Morello — more beautiful now than in the years of her careless, happy girlhood, for that her face wore the cast of the chastening spirit of patience — had hoped and waited and loved through three long years without one word from across the wide Atlantic. The world which is girdled now by the speaking wires of men's devising was so vast and uncertain and unknown in the day of Spanish conquest. As the months went by, the slow dying of buoyant hope, the even round of patient waiting, were come now to the hour of resignation. Teresita Morello's prayer on Christmas Eve

In Old Quivira

was only for strength to endure. No longer could she ask for her hope's fulfillment.

On the twenty-fourth of December, 1542, the Santa Carina, battered by shipwreck and tossed by contrary winds far from her course through many weeks of her voyage, came sailing up the harbor waters as a bird flies home to its nest. It came from the New World, and its welcome was like what no ship will ever have in these later years, for it brought a wealth of messages to waiting friends, and stories of life in the young civilization of the Western Hemisphere.

The bells of Seville were pealing out their glad song of joy on this Christmas morning. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men," was the burden of their glad refrain. In the hall of the old palace of Da Garda Ter-

In Old Quivira

esita Morello sat before the bright wood fire, gazing intently into its heart of cheery flame. The heavy hangings of the doorway parted, a step on the marble floor, and Tristan Gallego stood once more beside the girl he loved.

"Whom God hath joined together," the benediction of heaven shall compass about with peace and joy.

It was Christmastide in far Quivira. In the center of the largest village stood a cross, the shrine of all this little band. Father Padilla stood at the doorway of Isopete's tepee. Natana and a group of Indian women were gathered about him, and beyond them stood the Indian braves. Love and trust were seen on every face.

During the months that followed

In Old Quivira

the return of Padilla to Quivira the blessing of heaven had fallen abundantly upon him. Like children eager for knowledge, the simple-hearted Quivirans accepted his message. And because he himself so lived the thing he taught, they could not fail to understand it and to go themselves in the way his footsteps fell. Those months had brought more joy to the noble-hearted priest than all the years of his priesthood before.

“It is only the first seed-sowing,” he had said to himself. “There may be only one poor harvest now, and yet it is the beginning here. The Lord has chosen me to go first into this land and be His light-bearer. So He has strengthened my hands for this work, and, blessed be His holy name, He is with me here as He was with me in Old Spain.”

In Old Quivira

At this Christmas-time approaching Padilla had hoped to carry home to the Indian heart the beautiful story and beautiful lesson with a power new to them. His soul was full of joy. Like a little child in happy anticipation of good things to come, he awaited the dawn of the holy day. In all its coming he regretted only one thing: he longed just once for the sound of cathedral bells on Christmas morning. But his joy was not to be realized. For duty his Supreme Ruler willed other things for him.

The Indian mind is cunning. The neighboring tribes were not slow in learning of the strange new order in Quivira.

"The Quivira is crazy," they said; "a medicine-man has bewitched them. They have buried their tomahawks and they fall down before a

In Old Quivira

cross of stone. They do not scalp their enemies, but let them go unhurt. We shall all be so if this medicine-man Padilla stays here."

"Quivira is a fertile land," they said to each other. "If Quivira will not fight, let us go in and take the land and destroy all the tribe. But first we must be rid of Padilla. The tribe will dig up all the tomahawks for him, so much they love him. And left alone, an Indian is an Indian still. We must rid us of this bad Padilla. But how?"

That it should be done openly and violently they were too wise to attempt. And so they planned darkly.

Two days before Christmas a messenger came pleading in a strange tongue for help.

"My people," he said, "are sick. They have heard of you. They are only two days to the southeast.

In Old Quivira

Come and save them, good Padilla. You are said to love all men. They are all your brothers."

The Indian pressed a kiss on Padilla's cheek as he spoke. So Judas Iscariot had betrayed the Christ fifteen centuries before.

"Do not leave us, good Father," plead Natana and all the women.

"We fear for you," declared Isopete. "Stay with us. Do not believe him," pointing to the messenger.

"Have ye so learned Christ?" asked the Father gently. And they let him go.

How lonely was the village then! In Isopete's tent the Indians gathered and talked of Padilla.

"He will be back by the day after tomorrow," they said. "We are to have a holy-day."

In the tepee hung the sword of

In Old Quivira

Tristan Gallego, and the Indians touched it as a sacred thing.

"If the good father comes not back we will take this sword to avenge his death." But Isopete and Natana shook their heads.

"It is no longer to kill that we keep this sword," they said. The Quivirans only frowned.

"A sword is made to kill or else to be buried like our tomahawks," they said.

Father Padilla was led on toward the southeast, and came after a two-days journey to where the beautiful Neosho now ripples over rocky ways, through a beautiful grove. In all Quivira no forest trees grew as these trees grew here. They were leafless now, and the smoke from many skin lodges floated up through their branches.

"It is a beautiful land for my

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Christmas if I may only help these brethren. My Quivira children will await my coming patiently. Already I am building up a home in these plains."

So mused Fra Padilla as he was led from tent to tent. He found no sick nor broken-spirited ones, and his wonder grew to a certain conclusion: The scowling faces and cold angry gestures could mean only one thing — he was in the hands of enemies!

At the dawn of Christmas day he stood on a bluff above the river. A wide circle of savages shut him in. Not one pitying face was there. Padilla turned his eyes for the last time on the wide sweeping Kansas prairies on which the rare December day was pouring out its chrism of opal splendor.

"My Father"—that voice was

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never so rich and full and sweet as now — “my Father, I would have lived for this beautiful land. I would have lived for Thee here. Let me die for Thee here, Thy first martyr, but not Thy last on these plains.”

And then as his eyes caught sight of the jagged murderous stones the Indians held ready to hurl at him, the love of the Christ triumphed.

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Clear as in the day on Mount Calvary those loving words rang out for a sinful world, they sounded now on the desolate prairie of the new West.

Just one wish was Padilla's at that moment — a human longing for the sound of the old church-bells of Spain. A savage whoop and a storm of cruel stones beat against Juan

In Old Quivira

Padilla, crushing him to the earth. But the good priest felt it not. In his ears was the music of cathedral chimes — rich and full and strong the old, old chant of victory, "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOODWILL TOWARD MEN."

They found his broken body where the savages had fled away in terror from the height. Isopete and Natana buried it where it lay. Above the grave as the one last tribute the Quivira people built up a huge pile of stone. They heaped it high above their heads, in careful form, a column crudely four-square to the world.

"So Good Heart told me they do in Spain," said Natana. "We shall build here what will stand forever and all the people may see it, for here it is so high above all land so far as an Indian may run in a day

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